

STATION IV: THE CROWD CONDEMNS JESUS

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.” Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!” So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. – Matthew 27:11-26

JUDGEMENT

“Aside from the brutality and injustice in this passage, something has always puzzled me. Did Pilate really think he could simply wash his hands of the matter and claim innocence, in spite of his ultimate power over Jesus’ fate?”

STATION V: THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face. – John 19:1-3

HUMILIATION

“We generally think of crowns as beautiful objects made of precious materials – gold, studded with diamond or other precious gemstones. But in this case, the crown of thorns is the exact opposite. Thorns are earthly and dangerous. We speak of someone as a thorn in our side, or we find ourselves in a thorny situation. For Jesus, the crown of thorns was an excruciating prelude to torture and his eventual Crucifixion.”

STATION VI: JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS

And carrying the cross by himself, he went out to the Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. – John 19:17

SUFFERING

“In the swirling drama that is the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, many things leap out at the reader. Chief among them must surely be the cross itself, the means by which the savior of the world was executed. As if the cross itself is not shocking enough, Jesus was forced to carry his own cross to the execution site. Being fully human, Jesus must have found this not only physically challenging but also emotionally devastating.”